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*Affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO
HealthLink Wellness*



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U.S. Ranks Just 19th in Retirement Security Worldwide

U.S. retirees are facing worse conditions for their golden years than retired workers in many other developed countries -- from Canada and the United Kingdom to South Korea, CNN reports. The U.S. ranked 19th in retirement security for the second year in a row, according to information from Natixis Global Asset Management that ranked 150 countries based on health care, finances, economic well-being and quality of life factors. European countries took eight of the top 10 spots, lifted by strong social programs for seniors. Number 1 Switzerland, for instance, is known for its strong public and private pension system. In contrast, American workers increasingly have to save for retirement on their own or through workplace 401(k) plans, while high health care costs remain an added burden. More at <http://tinyurl.com/lfg23ns>.

"A nation as wealthy as the U.S should be doing better than 19th," said Barbara J. Easterling, President of the Alliance. "I see in these numbers more proof that we need to expand Social Security." The Alliance fully supports the Strengthening Social Security Act of 2013 (S.567), introduced by **Tom Harkin** (D-IA) in the U.S. Senate, and its companion bill H.R. 3118, introduced by Rep. **Linda Sanchez** (D-CA) in the House. The legislation would increase annual Social Security benefits by an average of \$800. It also improves the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) calculations by using a formula that reflects the cost of goods and services typically used by older Americans and ensures the Social Security Trust Fund remains solvent for years to come.

Virginia Alliance Member Joins Sen. Chris Murphy in Support of Affordable Care Act

On Wednesday, U.S. Senators **Chris Murphy** (D-CT), **Charles Schumer** (D-NY), **Debbie Stabenow** (D-MI), **Barbara Boxer** (D-CA), and **Sheldon Whitehouse** (D-RI) launched a coordinated effort in Congress to highlight the positive effects that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is having on millions of low- and middle-income Americans. Over the past four years, the law has provided health insurance coverage and new benefits to millions, reduced their overall cost of care, and reduced federal health spending. More than 6 million Americans have signed up for health insurance since 2010. Many say that Republicans in Congress have worked to sabotage the ACA by attempting to block implementation and deny funding for critical provisions of the law. At the Wednesday event, senators highlighted the impact the law has had on seniors across the U.S. Please tell us your story about affordable health care here: <http://bit.ly/1gHdg34>!

Virginia Alliance member **Ken Pease** joined the five senators, stating, "The Affordable Care Act is important, because it gives me peace of mind to know that my drug costs will be lower than they would have been without it. Repealing the health care law would send my prescription drug costs right back up again." Photos at <http://tinyurl.com/ooby3ve>. **Paul Krugman** wrote this week in *The New York Times* about the multitude of false stories propagated by opponents of health care reform in an effort to make their case. Read the article at <http://tinyurl.com/nxwu4vk>.

HealthLink Wellness

Quick Screening on Electronic Pad in Waiting Room Tells Doctor if Patient Depressed

Seniors may need to brush up on their iPad skills if new device becomes popular tool for screening patients in waiting rooms

By Valerie DeBenedette, HBNS Contributing Writer



A quick screening on an electronic pad in the doctor's waiting room appears to have the ability to easily recognize depression and anxiety in patients, who were actually there to visit the physician about another ailment. The results can be sent directly to the waiting doctor for immediate action.

Researchers at King's College London University piloted an electronic questionnaire with patients in six specialty services in three London hospitals: rheumatology, limb reconstruction, hepatitis C, psoriasis, congenital heart disease and chronic pain. Patients were asked to complete questions on a wireless touch-screen device while in the waiting room. The test included questions about depression and anxiety, as well as physical health outcomes and health behaviors. Results were immediately transmitted to the health care provider, who could then discuss them with the patient during the visit...[Read More](#)

Aging Men Find Life Gets Better Until Late 60s When Hassles Become Too Much

Some senior men continue to find happiness late in life despite dealing with family losses, declining health, or a lack of resources Oregon State study finds

By Mark Floyd, Oregon State University

A new study of how older men approach their golden years found that how happy individuals are remains relatively stable for some 80 percent of the population, but perceptions of unhappiness – or dealing with “hassles” – tends to get worse once you are a senior citizens at about 65 to 70 years old.

The reasons vary, researchers say, but may be because of health issues, cognitive decline or the loss of a spouse or friends.

“In general, life gets better as you age in the sense that older adults on average have fewer hassles – and respond to them better – than younger adults,” said Carolyn Aldwin, a gerontology professor in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences at Oregon State University and lead author on the study. “And they also experienced more uplifts – a least, until their mid-70s.”

“But once you turn 70, how you react to these hassles changes and may be dependent on your resources or your situation in life,” added Aldwin, the Jo Anne Leonard endowed director of OSU's Center for Healthy Aging Research...[Read More](#)



How You Rate Your Physical Fitness in Middle Age an Indicator of Dementia Risk

Rating yourself in poor physical condition at about 50 increases dementia risk by four



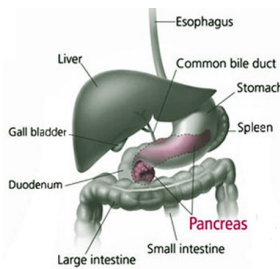
How would you rate your own physical fitness? Is it good, satisfactory or maybe even poor? Surprisingly, your answer may reveal your future risk of developing dementia.

A recent collaborative study from Finland, involving the follow-up of 3,559 adults for 30 years, has found that a simple question about self-rated physical fitness in midlife may reveal individuals who are at an increased risk of developing dementia.

Those who reported poor self-rated physical fitness in midlife, at the mean age of 50 years, were four times more likely to get dementia during the next three decades compared to those with good self-rated physical fitness...[Read More](#)

Acute Pancreatitis May Be Early Warning of Pancreatic Cancer, Especially for Senior Citizens

Early discovery of pancreatic cancer offers much greater opportunity for survival; researchers want esophageal ultrasound screening after acute pancreatitis



Pancreatic cancer is one of the most feared, due to its low survival rate, which is primarily due to the late discovery of the disease. Researchers seeking a way to find this cancer earlier and, hopefully, save lives have found what appears to be an early warning sign – acute pancreatitis - for many who will be hit with this cancer and their discovery may be most important for senior citizens age 70 and older.

In 2013, more than 45,000 Americans were diagnosed with cancer of the pancreas. Most over 65 years old.

In the study published in *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology*, Saint Louis University researchers have found a link between acute pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) and pancreatic cancer, a finding which they think may lead to some pancreatic cancers being detected earlier.

Principle investigator Banke Agarwal, M.D., associate professor of gastroenterology and hepatology at Saint Louis University, says the study builds on earlier research suggesting a connection between the two illnesses. "Our study demonstrates that there is a much higher risk of pancreatic cancer in patients with acute pancreatitis than commonly believed," Agarwal said.

Pancreatic cancer, the fourth most common cause of cancer death in the U.S., is usually diagnosed at an advanced stage because it has few early warning signs and no established screening method.

Only 4 percent of those who have pancreatic cancer survive five or more years after diagnosis. This low survival rate is in large part due to the advanced stage when most pancreatic cancer is diagnosed.

Surgical removal is the only chance to cure pancreatic cancer, but surgery is not an option in cases where the cancer has spread. At diagnosis, fewer than 20 percent of cases of pancreatic cancer are still localized enough to be removed surgically. Prior to this study there was some evidence of a higher incidence of pancreatic cancer in patients who are diagnosed with acute pancreatitis. What was unknown, however, was the rate that acute pancreatitis precedes a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer and the time between these two diagnoses.

Using the electronic health records of patients from the Veterans Health Administration between 1998 and 2007, researchers were able to determine the likelihood that a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer follows a diagnosis of acute pancreatitis, how often pancreatic cancer is preceded by acute pancreatitis, and the time between an initial episode of acute pancreatitis and diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. In addition, researchers identified patient characteristics most associated with a greater pancreatic cancer risk.

The study shows that in patients older than 40 with an episode of acute pancreatitis, 1.5 percent were eventually diagnosed with pancreatic cancer compared to 0.13 percent of patients without a prior episode of acute pancreatitis.

In addition, 12.1 percent of patients with pancreatic cancer had an episode of acute pancreatitis prior to the diagnosis of their cancer.

Incidents for Seniors Much Greater

Age, they found, significantly impacts the risk of pancreatic cancer for patients older than age 70 after acute pancreatitis. These aging senior citizens were found to have almost four times the risk of being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer compared to patients between the ages of 41 and 50.

According to John Hopkins Medicine, the risk of pancreatic cancer increases with age and more than 80 percent of all cases develop between the ages of 60 and 80.

In addition, of all the cases of pancreatic cancer diagnosed after an episode of acute pancreatitis, 55 percent were diagnosed three to 24 months after the episode of pancreatitis. This result indicates that many cases of pancreatic cancer potentially could have been diagnosed earlier had patients with acute pancreatitis been evaluated for pancreatic cancer.

In light of the late stage when pancreatic cancer is typically diagnosed and the significant rate of people diagnosed with acute pancreatitis that are subsequently diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, the study's authors suggest that patients over the age of 40 with acute pancreatitis should be evaluated for pancreatic cancer with esophageal ultrasound.

"As a point of reference, it's useful to consider that the relative number of patients with acute pancreatitis who are subsequently diagnosed with pancreatic cancer is greater than that of cancer discovered during colonoscopy screening," said Agarwal.

Established in 1836, Saint Louis University School of Medicine has the distinction of awarding the first medical degree west of the Mississippi River. The school educates physicians and biomedical scientists, conducts medical research, and provides health care on a local, national and international level. Research at the school seeks new cures and treatments in five key areas: cancer, liver disease, heart/lung disease, aging and brain disease, and infectious disease.

► What You Need to Know About Pancreatic Cancer – National Cancer Institute

Opposing a minimum wage hike, blocking unemployment insurance, cutting food stamps, keeping millions from accessing Medicaid I believe these positions are part of a **concerted effort to keep struggling folks down that represents nothing less than a war on the poor and working class.** The first step toward solving a problem is understanding it. So if, after you watch this video, you agree with me that it all adds up to a war on the poor and working class, **please share the video with your friends.**

Together, we can build an economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthiest 1%. Thanks for playing an active role in our democracy.

–Robert Reich



The New England ARA state affiliates are actively pursuing these Petitions.

House Concurrent Resolution 67 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 26 to get power doors installed in Post Offices and other federal buildings.

ADD
YOUR
NAME

**Get The Message Out:
SIGN THE PETITION!!!!**

Elimination of the Unfair GPO and WEP Provisions of the Social Security Act to make sure the Congress of the United States enacts legislation, HR 3118 & S 896

ADD
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NAME

**Get The Message Out:
SIGN THE PETITION!!!!**